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ABSTRACT

The motivations and career expectations of educational administration students are explored in this study. Methodology involved the administration of questionnaires to all 57 students enrolled in an administrator preparation program. Findings indicate that the largest number, although not a majority, cited the achievement of credentials as the major motivating factor for enrolling in the program and that program enrollment is related to students' expectations of becoming administrators. Overall, males and females shared similar expectations and motivations; however, students under 30 years old held higher expectations of becoming administrators than did those over 30. Race was discarded as a separate variable of analysis. A recommendation is made for further study of the situation, in view of the lack of available educational administrative positions and growing job pool applicants. Two tables and one figure are included. (9 references) (LMI)

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Administrative Certification, Motivation and Career Expectations: A Study of Students of Educational Administration

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ADMINISTRATIVE CERTIFICATION, MOTIVATION AND CAREER EXPECTATIONS: A STUDY OF STUDENTS OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Increasing numbers of students are seeking certification as administrators and taking degrees in educational administration (NCES, 1982). This is particularly true of females whose numbers in educational administration programs have increased dramatically in the last ten years (NCES, 1982).

In the past, where the numbers of students seeking certification more nearly matched the numbers of administrative positions to be filled, few questions were raised about the motivations or expectations of students enrolled in administrative programs. It was implicitly assumed that they aspired to be administrators and sought certification as a means to that end.

It has been suggested that those who currently hold administrative certification across the country exceed--perhaps even far exceed--the number of positions currently available and likely to be available in the near future, even allowing for a large number of projected vacancies at the building level in the next five to ten years. Given these factors, i.e., increasing numbers of students seeking and gaining certification and a potential pool of certified applicants which exceeds likely positions, it has become both more relevant and pertinent to ask why students who enroll are seeking certification as administrators. What are their motives? Do they aspire to become school administrators? Or are there other reasons for

their enrollment? What are their career expectations? Do they expect to become school administrators? Hope to become administrators? Or have no expectations related to administration? And if they expect or hope to become administrators, how reasonable are these expectations in the face of projected vacancies?

Why students are seeking certification and what they expect to happen after becoming certified are important questions for the field. And the answers have enormous implications for the students in preparation programs, for school districts, the potential employers, and for those who prepare educational administrators.

Motivation is a goal-directed driving force. It defines the "why" of one's behavior. Expectations, what one wishes/believes will happen, and expectancy, one's perception of the likelihood of something happening (outcome) as a result of doing something (action), are inextricable aspects of motivation. Expectations and expectancies constitute a cognitive screen through which individuals perceive and from which they interpret the world. For students of educational administration, their motivation(s) for seeking certification and the expectations and expectancies they bring to such programs are important, unseen, unexamined aspects of who they are and what they will become. Critical examination of these dimensions provides a basis for better understanding the students in such programs, and thus for their

most effective preparation. It also provides basic information helpful, if not important, to the field, and adds clarity to the research in the field, in particular that which has been done about females in administration.

Studies about females in administration, those who have sought or moved into administrative positions in schools, have generated intriguing, not always consistent findings about their expectations and expectancies. Studies of aspirational levels of males and females for administrative appointment (Diaz, 1976; Ortiz and Corvel, 1978; Valverde, 1980) found little to support the heretofore widely held notion that females had lower aspirational levels than males which therefore explained their disparate appointment rates. Indeed, these researchers suggested that females had higher aspiration levels than males. Edson (1987; 1988), in her longitudinal study of 142 female aspirants nationally, found that her subjects were focused on securing administrative appointments and they saw, and therefore undertook, graduate training in administration as a route to such administrative appointment.

In contrast, Reynolds (1988), in comparing a matched sample of 12 male and female principals in Canada, found marked differences between the males and females she interviewed in terms of attribution (males attributed their success to their mental abilities; females to their hard work); expectancies (males expected few internal or external barriers to their

advancement; females expected both internal and external barriers to advancement); and how they perceived the prospects and therefore behaved. Males actively sought promotion, looked for opportunities to realize their aspiration, and jumped at the opportunity when presented. Females, on the other hand, were fearful about their ability to do the job, waited for appointment to the position, and were hesitant to accept the position. Mertz and McNeely (1990) studied 20 females who had succeeded in becoming line administrators (high school principals, superintendents) in one state. They found that the females fell into one of two categories. Somewhat more than half of the subjects said they had not sought certification and advanced study with an eye to becoming administrators and had not thought about becoming an administrator until approached by their school system. The other group, less than half of the subjects, actively sought certification with the intent and recognized desire of becoming an administrator.

These studies underscore the relevance of motivation and expectation in educational administration and raise questions about the expectations students bring to its study. What are the students' motivations for seeking administrator preparation? What expectations do they bring about their future? Are there differences among students in their motivations and expectations, including differences on the basis of gender? And if so, what differences do such differences make?

PURPOSE

The purpose of the study was to begin to examine these questions about the motivation and expectations of educational administration students by studying the motivations and expectation of students enrolled in an administrator preparation program in one large, land-grant institution. The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. Why are these students enrolled in the programs?
2. What are their expectations about administrative appointment?
3. Are there differences among the students in terms of motivation and expectation, and if so, what factors delineate these differences?

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was developed to address the purposes of the study. Given the nature of the information sought, the researchers attempted to construct a form that would be simple to complete, short and to the point, and relatively non-intrusive. If the questions being asked in the study were indeed important to the field, then it seemed critical to develop a form for getting at the questions that would be easy for others to use. The form developed appeared to meet these criteria. (See Figure 1.)

The questionnaire was distributed to all of the students enrolled in either a certification-only or a certification-based degree program (master's, specialist or doctoral) in the institution selected in one semester (n=57). Access was provided by the professor in each course and the questionnaires were distributed, completed, and picked up during the same class period. The subjects represented all stages of participation in the program and, because a 100% return rate was possible (of those to whom the questionnaire was distributed), the full range of students in the program. It may be that some students in the program were missed because they were not taking classes that semester, so no claim is made that every student in the program was reached. However, the semester used was the one with the largest student enrollment.

The questionnaire asked the subjects for demographic information about themselves, including gender, age, race, current position, district, years of teaching, subject area, and coaching experience. The subjects were then asked to choose (from a list provided) and prioritize, (1) possible reasons for seeking administrative certification, and (2) the statement which best described their related career expectations. Subjects were directed to choose only those items which applied.

The data were collated by question and in terms of demographics. Simple statistical procedures, averages, percents and frequencies, were used to analyze the data. The data were

analyzed for the group and in terms of the gender, race, age, and current position of the respondents.

FINDINGS

All 57 students completed the questionnaire. The respondents included 19 males and 38 females; 7 blacks, 49 caucasians, and 1 race unknown. Blacks represented 11% of both males and females. The average age of the respondents as a group was 38.05 years (range: 24 to 50). Thirty-eight were teachers, 7 were administrators, 2 were counselors, 2 were students, 1 was a librarian, and 7 identified themselves as "others," which included some sort of traveling specialist, administrative intern or program facilitator. One was involved at the pre-school level, 19 at the elementary level, 7 at the middle school level, 17 at the high school level, 5 in K-12, 2 at K-8, 5 in post-secondary, and 1 was a student that had never taught. The group represented 17 different school districts, the state department of education, and 3 post-secondary institutions. They had served in their present districts an average of 10.2 years (range: 1 to 28 years), had taught an average of 11.95 years (range: 1 to 28 years), and represented 20 different subject areas. The person who had not taught was not included in group averages about teaching. Eleven reported having had coaching experience.

In response to the question asking them to identify and prioritize their reason(s) for seeking administrative

certification, credentialling was identified as the primary reason by the largest number of subjects (46%), followed by eligibility to move up on the salary schedule (25%), and personal and professional growth (23%). Table 1 shows the responses (numbers and percentages) of all subjects to the question in terms of their identification and prioritization.

Insert Table 1 about here

In response to the question about their administrative career expectations, 65% not only aspired to become administrators, but had varying degrees of expectancy about realizing that aspiration. Twenty-eight percent "expected" to become an administrator, followed by 26% who "wanted" to become an administrator, and 11% who reported they had been given reason to expect that they would receive an administrative appointment. Table 2 shows the responses (numbers and percentages) of all subjects to the question in terms of identification and prioritization.

Insert Table 2 about here

In examining the data in terms of the demographic variables, there were no discernible differences amongst respondents because of the type of district from which they came, current position,

level at which they taught, or subject taught. Coaching experience also did not relate to the motivations or expectations expressed.

Race had to be discarded as a separate variable of analysis because 6 of the 7 blacks were involved in a special program and both their selection and preparation were different from that being received by the majority of the students. They had been specially chosen by their school districts to be prepared for positions in administration, and while they did not have a promised job, their very involvement was predicated on the desire and commitment of the school system to prepare them for such an eventuality. They had competed for a place in the program, been chosen by the school district, and they clearly came with the expectation that they would become administrators. The one other black subject in the study was already an administrator, thus this subject's responses were also contextually framed. Data from the black subjects were considered and analyzed for the total group of respondents, but not as a separate group.

When the data were examined in terms of gender, male and female respondents were more alike than different in their motivations and expectations. More than 90% of both males and females identified and prioritized the same top three motivating factors: credentialling, moving up on the salary schedule, and personal and professional growth, although there were differences

in the percentages of each group choosing each of the three responses.

Credentialling was chosen by 53% of the males versus 42% of the females. Moving up on the salary schedule was chosen by 32% of the females, but only 11% of the males. Personal and professional growth was chosen by 26% of the males, but only 15% of the females. (See Table 1 for the responses to each question by gender.)

Male and female respondents were even more alike in their expectations than they had been in their motivation. As with their motivations, the same top three expectations were chosen by each group: "expect" to become an administrator, "want" to become an administrator, and "given reason to expect" an administrative appointment. The percentages of responses by group were similar. (See Table 2 for the responses to each question by gender.)

When the data were examined in terms of age, differences in response emerged. Ten subjects, 6 male and 4 female, were under 30 years of age. While they were similar to the over-30 group in their responses about motivation, they differed in their responses about expectation. Sixty percent of the under-30's "expect" to become administrators versus 21% of the over-30 group. When age and gender were combined as factors of analysis, there was an even more noticeable difference. Seventy-five percent of the under-30 females "expect" to become administrators

versus 32% of the over-30 females. Fifty percent of the under 30 males "expect" to become administrators versus 15% of the over-30 males.

DISCUSSION

The study sought to learn why students were enrolled in the administrator preparation program studied, i.e., what their motivation was. While the largest number, but not a majority, cited credentialling as the major motivating factor, it is clear that their enrollment was related to their future desires and/or expectations. A majority "expected" or "wanted" to become administrators--even if one does not take into account the 11% who had reason to expect they would receive an appointment at the completion of the program. Realization of their desires or expectations would be impossible without appropriate credentials. While students had multiple reasons for enrolling in the administrator preparation program, including personal and professional growth (a reason that stirs the souls of educators), the results lend suggestive support to the assumption that students enroll in preparation programs primarily because they would like to become administrators.

The fact that younger (under 30) respondents were more likely to "expect" to become administrators than older (over 30) respondents was an intriguing finding. What accounts for their expectation? Are their expectations reasonable or a product of

lack of knowledge, experience, and/or political savvy about their school districts and how one becomes an administrator? How long will they have to wait for administrative appointment? School districts tend to value experience as a criterion for administrative appointment and time and experience tend to be related. And what will happen when they return to teaching to await that appointment to an administrative position? What affect will a wait have on the attitudes and morale of this group? Is there a "wait-time" beyond which their expectations are no longer a motivating force?

The same questions might be asked of the over-30 subjects who expect to become administrators. What affect will their expectations have on their behavior, satisfaction, and morale? And how long will they have to wait for appointment?

While the study answered the immediate questions asked, it raised new questions about the affects of realization or nonrealization of expectations. More students appear to be preparing for administrative positions than there are or will be positions. Clearly, not all who seek positions, both those who expect and those who want such positions, will realize their goals. What affects will this have on their behavior, attitudes, and work-satisfaction? Will these persons stay in teaching or related work or abandon the field? Do preparation programs have some responsibility for addressing questions of expectation, realities and their effects?

As a way of getting at these questions, the respondents in the study will be followed over the next five years to see what happens to them. They will be followed informally until 1995. At that time they will be formally interviewed to see where they are in their career and how they perceive what has happened to them since participating in this study.

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Table 1.

Reasons for Seeking Administrative Certification

Reason	Male Respondents (n=19)		Female Respondents (n=38)		Total Respondents (n=57)	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Move on Salary Schedule	2	11	11	29	13	23
Personal/Professional Growth	5	26	9	24	14	24.5
Credentialling	10	53	16	42	26	46
Update Certification	1	5	0	0	1	1.5
Other	1	5*	2	5–	3	5

* Improve credibility.
– Credentials for a position in higher education. Urged to do so by principal and others.

Table 2.

Administrative Career Expectations

Reason	Male Respondents (n=19)		Female Respondents (n=38)		Total Respondents (n=57)	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Expect to be Administrator	5	26	11	29	16	28
Want to be Administrator	5	26	9	23.8	14	24.5
Willing to do Whatever Necessary to be Administrator	1	5	1	2.6	2	3.5
If They Ask I Will Not Say No	2	11	2	5	4	7
Do Not Think They Will Ask			1	2.6	1	2
No Interest in Being An Administrator	1	5	3	8	4	7
Given Reason to Expect Will Receive Administrative Appointment	3	16	3	8	6	10.5
Current Assignment Involves Administrative Duties-- Need Certification	2	11	6	16	8	14
Other			2	5*	2	3.5

* Interested in Positions Related to Field Which Require Administrative Certification.

Wish to Remain in Classroom Unless "Lotterized." Will Then Seek Higher Position.

Figure 1.

CERTIFICATION SURVEY

Name_____ Address_____

_____(please include city and zip)

Gender___male
___female

Current/Last Position___teacher
___counselor
___librarian
___administrator
___student
___other
_____(specify)

Race/Ethnicity___Black
___Caucasian
___Asian
___Hispanic

Age___(years)

Level of Current/Last Position___elementary
___middle/junior high
___high school
___post-secondary

School District_____

Years in District_____

Years of Teaching_____

Primary subject(s)
Taught_____

Interscholastic Coaching Experience_____ Years_____

Sport(s)_____Level_____

Prioritize those items listed below (or listed by you) in order of their importance as reasons you are seeking administrative certification. Skip any that do not apply and add any ones not listed. Include any add-ins in your prioritizing. Use 1 for the item of greatest importance, 2 for the next, and so on.

___working toward a degree or +45 to be eligible to move to another level on the salary schedule

___personal/professional growth

___credentialing (to be able to fill an administrative position)

___to update teacher certification

___to join a friend or colleague in the program

___a professor you especially liked

___reputation of the program

___why not (pick up something useful or possibly useful)

___other (identify)_____

_____

Which of the following statements best describes you attitude at the present time. Check one. If more than one is applicable, prioritize them (1 = closest description).

___I definitely expect to become an administrator

___I want to become an administrator

___I am willing to do whatever is necessary to become an administrator

___If they ask me (to become an administrator) I will not say no

___I do not think they will ask me (to become an administrator)

___I have no real interest in becoming an administrator

___I have been given reason to expect that I will receive an administrative appointment

___My current assignment involves administrative duties and I am waiting on my certification to make it official.

___other (identify)_____

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